



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

REGISTRAR-RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK

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CONNY B. McCORMACK
REGISTRAR-RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK

August 27, 2002

TO: EACH SUPERVISOR

FROM: Conny B. McCormack, Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

UPDATE ON MULTILINGUAL VOTER SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

Earlier this month, the U.S. Census Bureau released detailed information used by the U.S. Department of Justice to determine which foreign languages election materials and services are required to be provided to limited-English speaking voters nationwide for the next decade. These services include mailing translated election materials (including sample ballot booklets) to requesting voters, providing translated materials at targeted polling places and recruiting bilingual poll workers. Fortunately, the County will experience no change in the multilingual services we have been providing in six foreign languages including Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, Tagalog and Vietnamese. Unfortunately, the multilingual requirements remain a non-funded federal mandate and the costs are skyrocketing as explained below.

Good News: No Increase in the Number of Languages Required

Korean was officially added to the list of federally mandated languages for our County. As you know, we have been providing Korean language translations and services since the November 1998 General Election at your Board's request. Now it becomes a federal mandate.

Bad News: Skyrocketing Costs

The Multilingual Voter Services Program costs average \$2.2 million per countywide election. Translation, printing and mailing costs for the multilingual program exceeded \$2.9 million for the March 2002 Primary Election. As more voters are expected to request these services in future years, the costs are anticipated to increase.

Partnerships with Community Service Organizations

Our Department has taken a proactive role with our Multilingual Services Program and our approach has been emulated not only by other California counties, but also by counties nationwide. Long-term partnerships have been formed with numerous

community organizations to provide voter education, recruit bilingual poll workers and distribute information on the multilingual services offered by the County. Dozens of voter advocacy groups attend our Department's quarterly Community Voter Outreach Committee (CVOC) meetings at which bilingual poll worker recruiting production reports are provided and discussed, problems experienced by limited-English voters in previous elections are cited in an environment of solution-based thinking, and escalating cost concerns are shared. A list of participating CVOC organizations is attached and includes the National Association of Latino Elected Officials (NALEO), the Asian-Pacific American Legal Center (APALC), the Korean American Coalition (KAC), the League of Women Voters and representatives from the political parties to name a few.

Our Department initiated in 1999, and continues to chair, a statewide Committee to collect, distribute and foster discussion of best practices with regard to provision of multilingual services. We are continually requested to make presentations on our multilingual program at national conferences of election administrators as well as at meetings of California Registrars. Many counties throughout the U.S. were impacted by new requirements for provision of multilingual services based on the recently released Census data. California was especially heavily impacted, increasing from 22 to 27 the number of counties required to provide election services in foreign languages and many of the 27 counties gained numerous languages compared with their previous requirements. For example, Orange County must now add Chinese and Korean to their former Spanish and Vietnamese multilingual services program and Santa Clara County is now also required to provide all voter services in four foreign languages.

If you have any questions regarding our Department's multilingual voter services program please call me or Jennifer Collins-Foley, Assistant RR/CC of Election Services Bureau, at (562) 462-2722.

Attachment

C: CAO
County Counsel